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Please find attached a draft section of my soon to be released book, From the "***Hood to the Woods,***" fundamentally the book is about my 30+ years of experience connecting under-served youth groups to nature and outdoor career paths. The text is still in draft form and needs to be edited. I'm happy to explain the attached section to the group. I can also explain how our staff training program, **DOLI** works – the Diverse Outdoor Leadership Institute, dedicated to training urban people of color to enter the outdoor education sector.

## **The Science Behind the Historical Absence of Minorities**

There are five commonly accepted hypothesis that attempt to explain why minorities and urban people of color have been underrepresented in the outdoor industry. I can add 40 years of empirical and anecdotal data that corroborates each of these hypothesis.

Marginality: The marginality hypothesis discusses racial/ethnic differences and attributes minority under-representation to socioeconomic factors such as limited education, minimal financial resources, and restrained employment opportunities in the outdoor industry and conservation careers caused by historical discrimination (Stanfield, 2008).

Subculture/Ethnicity: This hypothesis claims that the marginality hypothesis influences recreation and outdoor use patterns but attributes differences in national park visitation and other outdoor landscapes to at least partially to cultural norms, value systems, social organizations, and socialization practices, consistent with Dr. Nichols work detailed in his *Philosophical Aspects of Cultural Difference Matrix*. Examples of cultural values or norms can include preferred group size, desired activities (e.g., hiking, biking, swimming, picnicking), and amenities present (e.g., bathrooms, covered tables, visitor centers) (Stanfeld, 2008 & Chavez, 2000).

Discrimination: The discrimination hypothesis places significance and weight on contemporary (post-civil rights) discrimination that visitors experience from interactions and personal contact with other outdoor enthusiasts, other visitors in a national park, park personnel or through institutional policies, like interpretation of the dominant culture experience and the exclusion of the Native American, African American, Asian American,

etc. experience. Or even worst, interpreting other's stories for them based on your own ethnocentric view (Stanfield, 2008).

Twenty-four miles east of Austin Texas, sits a historical marker called the Hickison Summit Marker, that marker tells the story of aboriginal petroglyphs left in the area, and tells us what the petroglyphs mean, but the truth is that what is written on the marker is a guess or suggestion of what the rock art possibly could represent. It is an interpretation of someone's else's interpretation of art. Unfortunately, our current day interpretation came thousands of years after the original artist was gone and the multitude of "expert" hypothesis that interpreted the petroglyphs are contaminated with our own cultural bias and ethnocentrism, the accurate deciphering of most petroglyphs may not ever happen. They could be clan symbols, religious rituals, fertility rites, references to important events of the day, maps, interpretations of constellations, simple doodlings and images shamans saw while high on hallucinogenic drugs! In his book "*Petroglyphs in and Out of Perspective*" Charles Lock claims that he is "less than enthusiastic about the possibility of learning anything about petroglyphs, even with the help of the most advanced technology." Perhaps it is best explained by James Loewen in "*Lies Across America,*" "Archaeology is a difficult undertaking. Archaeologist must understand not only a society's technology, occupations and kinship but also its religious belief architecture, the botany of the plants it used, even its disease history. Indeed, archaeologists must be experts on every aspect of the society they study – but they can't be. Moreover, they face the task of trying to reconstruct all the foregoing from the faintest evidence – those few objects that have survived for hundreds or thousands of years. On top of that, since most ideas come into a culture from other cultures,

archaeologists need to be experts on more than one society. The result is that archaeologists often end up projecting ideas from our own culture onto the largely blank slate of the distant past..." (Loewen, 2000). To further complicate matters we don't know if the art represents things that even existed at the time it was drawn because we do know that "speakers of different languages envision the future unfolding in different directions." In other words, what the artist may have captured on the rock two-thousand years ago, could be symbolic of a future envisioned to have unfolded in his or her past. [Scientific American Mind July/Aug 2014]. Knowing this we continue to create stories for other cultures based on our own cultural viewpoints as well as continue to explain and define what others are expressing based on our very limited perspective of their world.

Opportunity: The opportunity hypothesis examines the relationship between geography or proximity of minority populations and the location of recreational sites, and recreation preferences. In the above case of Lonell, geography played little to no role, but elements of the Marginality hypothesis, (lack of education, especially outdoor/environmental education) are much stronger indicators of causation. I have seen the relationship in the opportunity hypothesis displayed multiple times in the inner-city, real world of park poor neighborhoods where it was clearly evident that had some open space been closer to the neighborhoods of the youth we were serving, they surely would be using it, the relationship examined in this hypothesis however is further complicated when the park nearest their homes are gang infested and a dangerous place to visit (Stanfield, 2008 & Payne, Orsega-Smith 2002).

Acculturation: This hypothesis examines the relationship between cultural assimilation into the dominant culture and recreational preferences. According to this hypothesis, as a

minority culture assimilates into the majority culture, they begin to take on the recreational patterns of the majority culture (Stanfield, 2008 & Floyd, 1999). The language of this hypothesis can be confusing because to say a minority culture “assimilates” into a majority culture can create an irreconcilable opposition of terms given that many minority groups attempt to maintain their autonomy from the mainstream, while these groups engage in recreational activities historically seen as mainstream preferences. I’ve seen minority individuals engaging in outdoor sports with a group of folks from the majority culture, but given the opportunity to be with members of their own culture they will inevitably opt to be with those who maintain their own cultural characteristics. So to say an assimilation is occurring can be confusing. While I agree with Floyd that a relationship between assimilation and adoption does exist, I contend that cultural groups often adopt recreational activities while asserting their own cultural identity, to say that members of the Black Skiers Association have assimilated into the greater white culture would be less than accurate, the same goes for whites who have adopted surfing as a recreational preference, they have assimilated no more into the Hawaiian culture than the black skiers have assimilated into the white culture. Notwithstanding that surfing is seen as a white sport and its culturally deep and rich Hawaiian roots have all been but forgotten. My argument is that minorities do adopt recreational preferences historically seen as the playground of the majority culture, but the cultural assimilation relationship is becoming less obvious as minority groups are able to engage in these activities without ever truly assimilating into mainstream culture. At this writing, (early 2017), I regularly see large groups of Korean, Japanese and Chinese hikers on a trail I frequent that is 14 miles north east of downtown Los Angeles – not a

single word of English is being spoken nor is there a non-Asian face amongst the 40 to 50 individuals.

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